

OPINION

regarding the application of Vasil Atanasov Kolev, PhD
for the competition for academic position *Associate Professor*
in the scientific specialty *Project Management*,
field of higher education 8.1. *Theory of Arts*
at the Department of Fine Arts, AMDFA Prof. Assen Diamandiev , Plovdiv
Topic of habilitation dissertation: *Plovdiv – art-organizations and their management
experience*

Applicant and competition data

Vasil Atanasov Kolev, PhD, takes part in the competition for the academic position *Associate Professor* in the scientific specialty *Project Management*, professional field 8.1. *Theory of Arts*, Department of Fine Arts. The competition is announced in the State Gazette, issue. 40 of May 17 2019, pp. 107-108. To this end, he has presented a habilitation dissertation in the form of a monograph, six separate articles thematically related to it. A book based on his doctoral dissertation is also attached to the documents. There are also references to citations, the applicant's teaching experience, the courses he has developed, his participation in prestigious international forums, and partaking in the organization of such events. The applicant's submission also includes certificates for projects won under various programs, including the Research Fund.

Vasil Kolev has a Master's Degree in Art Management from AMDFA Prof. Assen Diamandiev obtained in 2010. Since 2014 he has been teaching the courses *Project Management, Project Development and Management* and *Cultural Tourism* at the Academy. In 2018, she defended his doctoral thesis entitled *Methodology in project management and its peculiarities in art organizations* at AMDFA --Plovdiv. He has been the leader of the *Spring Scientific Readings* project at AMTI-Plovdiv since 2015. He is the author of a number of articles on the issues of art management in the specialized scientific press in Bulgaria and abroad.

Description of the habilitation dissertation

The monograph *Plovdiv – art-organizations and their management profile* contains an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. A questionnaire is included as an appendix, on

the basis of which an empirical study of specific organizations from the scope of the creative industries has been made, whose results are summarized in Chapter Three. The bibliography includes 62 sources (excluding Internet citations), 20 of them in Bulgarian and 42 in English. The authorship of the monograph is divided equally between Vesela Kazashka, Vasil Kolev and Margarita Ruseva, with each author having a share of approximately 120 pages. Regarding the number of pages, this is a sufficient prerequisite for successful habilitation. A decent division statement is presented for the purpose.

The introduction provides the background for the need for such research: first, since creative industries in our country are still often managed by the artists themselves, who tend to take care of their production themselves, the artists need to acquire some economic and managerial competence; second, since creativity is a specific domain of production, standard managerial knowledge needs to be upgraded with knowledge of the specificity of that particular domain.

The first chapter contains two separate reviews needed as an introduction to the issue: the first one presents the historical heritage of the city of Plovdiv and the second examines the development of management in the field of arts from ancient times to the present day. The review of the cultural development of Plovdiv over the centuries does not represent a curtsey to the city, nor does it outline a smooth introductory impression as a background of the specialized economic discourse. At any given moment, the authors place emphasis on some of the iconic successful projects in the city, related to history (such as the Small Basilica and the Episcopal Basilica) or to specific places in the urban landscape (Kapana), directly applying the project approach to the specific urban sight.

The second review in this first chapter is, in a sense, surprising. We are used to thinking of management as a product of recent times, and certainly as a function of the processes of industrialization evolving in parallel with the initial development of the social sciences in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The authors propose a concept whereby, if not management as a whole, at least art management has been clearly present since antiquity. This, however controversial, seems to me to have its thematic grounds, insofar as in antiquity one could think of the nature of symbolic capital. That is, a maecenas knows that he will suffer financial losses, but he orders and promotes art because of the prestige it brings. This perspective, however, remains unclarified, leaving the reader with the impression that the purpose of the work here is: art is eternal, management is also eternal. In this respect, it is

difficult to agree, for example, that Nicolo Machiavelli has contributed to the development of management.

The third component included in the first chapter is the identification of state policies for the support of the arts in the period 2007-2018. This section could indeed be of practical use to the organizations concerned. Extensive work has been done to systematize, compare and summarize. By itself, this section can serve as a well-structured guidebook. In the interest of the overall composition of the monograph, it would be better to relate this component more clearly to the previous sections (the two historical reviews).

Chapter Two – Financial Management and Control –steadily enters the area of specialized management discourse. The ambition here is to start from the beginning - from the basic definitions and structures of management. Such a choice is defensible from two points of view: first, the monograph targets people from the artistic domain who not only do not feel comfortable in specialized managerial talk, but as a result of their discomfort tend to deprive themselves of project management skills; second, the smooth universal introduction of management principles is intended to show that artmanagement is not some fundamentally different space for management principles and practices, but is rather a special case with its specific requirements.

The main topics in Chapter Two are the explanation of the extensive audit control system (with an exemplary focus on the EU countries) to which the beneficiary is subject, and the risk management issues. There is also a secret didactic ingredient in the text - an implicit appeal to the responsibility of project applicants and managers in general have. It is suggested that values and ideas are leading, and funds - regardless of their source - remain the sole means of implementing the ideas. Due to its distinctive focus, the monograph maintains a balance between the specialized language and the casual talk (for example, explaining that "the auditor is not an enemy" but "not a friend either").

Chapter three focuses on the specific empirical study of organizations in Plovdiv, which belong to the so-called "creative industries", and systematizes the results of the study. To this end, the responds to the survey are summarized in tables and charts. Here lies the practical perspective of the monograph. Based on the results of the study, the profile of the so-called creative industries in the city is made: their branch specificity, characteristics of their personnel and management structures, the orientation of the cash flow at their disposal, their turnover, etc.

Scientific contributions

- A significant contribution of the monograph is that it directs the bases of company management to the immediate practice of the art-organizations and their specific needs and requirements.
- Another contribution is the development of the principles of management practice in direct relation to project management. This setting brings both theoretical contributions to a particular case in management, as well as concrete practical benefits for the representatives of creative industries.
- On the basis of the two contributions above, there follows the characteristic specificity of the present work: it, on the one hand, acts as an introduction to business management, and, on the other, serves as a specialized guide for art managers. Such a strategy of presenting the monograph is in itself valuable and has many benefits.
- Existence of extensive documentation on the state policy in support the creative industries, as well as the possibilities for financing projects from EU financial sources. This information is summarized in tables, explanations and comments.
- The monograph focuses on Plovdiv as a location for creative industries - something that has certainly not been done so far. At the same time, the focus of the presentation is a snapshot of the current state of the city and its art-organizations. At the same time, Plovdiv's potential as a place for the creative industries has been traced in a diachronic section.
- For the first time, a complete structural profile of art-organizations in Plovdiv has been made, and for that purpose a comprehensive methodology with a related survey strategy have been developed.

Conclusion

Based on the undoubtedly contributive character of the monograph *Plovdiv – art-organizations and their management profile*, I propose to the distinguished jury to award Vasil Atanasov Kolev the academic position of associate professor and firmly vote in favour of this decision.

Prof. Dr. Galina Lardeva (AMDFA Prof. Assen Diamandiev, Plovdiv)

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